



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OUTBREAK OF RABIES RAGES
IN STATE OF WASHINGTON.

An outbreak of rabies is raging in the eastern part of the State of Washington, according to reports reaching the Department of Agriculture, U.S. Biological Survey. The disease made its appearance among coyotes in a very virulent form last August and soon spread over Grant, Franklin, Adams, Douglas, and Benton Counties. Coyotes suffering from the disease attacked people in their dooryards and in the streets of the towns, necessitating administration of the Pasteur treatment to save their lives. Horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs were bitten and died or had to be killed. Twenty-five cattle were thus lost on a single farm. Many dogs have been bitten by rabid coyotes, thus greatly increasing the danger to people and live stock from the disease.

Appeal for assistance was made to Dr. Glenn R. Bach, Predatory Animal Inspector of the Biological Survey in charge of the force of hunters employed cooperatively by the Federal and State Departments of Agriculture and engaged in destroying coyotes and other predatory animals as a means of protecting live stock. He arranged promptly to place hunters in the localities where the disease occurred for the purpose of destroying the affected coyotes and others which might become infected and serve further to spread the epidemic.

Officials of the State Agricultural Department, the Live Stock Sanitary Board, and State and County health offices joined heartily under the leadership of the representative of the United States Department of Agriculture in establishing quarantine measures and in organizing a vigorous campaign to prevent the spread of the disease and to eradicate it. County agricultural agents took an active part in organizing communities so that the operations of hunters might be most effective in reporting cases where people and live stock were bitten by rabid animals and in sending to the State agricultural college for positive diagnosis heads of animals killed and suspected of being affected with the disease.

All but one of the State and Federal predatory-animal hunters employed in the State of Washington were concentrated in the counties where the disease made its appearance. Long trap and poison lines were established and carefully tended to destroy affected coyotes and others which might serve as carriers. Nearly a thousand coyotes have been killed and found during the past five months, and many more took the deadly poisoned baits, but their bodies have not been located due to the heavy drifting snow.

Despite efforts thus made to prevent the spread of the disease, cases continue to occur, and it is feared, owing to the virulence of the present epidemic, that it may be spread by coyotes into other States, causing a repetition of the disastrous outbreak which began in 1915 and extended into five of the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast States. During that epidemic 2,100 persons were bitten by rabid animals, and heavy mortality was prevented only by promptly giving the Pasteur treatment. Fifty-nine persons who did not receive the treatment in time died. In many localities children had to be accompanied to and from school by armed guards. Many hundred thousand dollars worth of cattle, sheep, hogs, and horses died as a result of being bitten by rabid coyotes.

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